

THE HEALTH OF THE COLONY IN 1885.

The following extracts are taken from the Report of the Colonial Surgeon for the year 1885 which was laid before the Legislative Council on the 14th ultimo:—

GOVERNMENT CIVIL HOSPITAL.
Hongkong, May 10th, 1886.
Sir,—I have the honour to forward my Annual Report for the year 1885, together with the Table showing the work done in the different Establishments in my Department. I also forward reports from the Superintendent of the Government Civil Hospital, the Superintendent of the Lock Hospital, and the Government Analyst.

POLICE.
The admissions from the Police Force to Hospital show the slight increase of nine in 1885 as compared with the admissions in 1884. For the last five years the number of admissions to Hospital have been as follows:—1881, 498; 1882, 549; 1883, 600; 1884, 486; and 1885, 495; so that the improvement in the health of the whole Force taken as a total, when the strength of the different years is taken into consideration, still continues. The average strength of the Force in the last five years has been as follows:—1881, 624; 1882, 682; 1883, 693; 1884, 660; and 1885, 674.

There were nine deaths in the Force this year, viz., three Europeans, one Indian and five Chinese. Two Europeans died in Hospital, one from cholera and one from heat apoplexy. The other died in his own quarters from apoplexy. The Indian died while in India on leave. Of the Chinese, three died in Hospital, one of these of cholera, the rest away in China on leave.

The Central District Stations, as usual, show up worst, but this year worse than ever in the European portion of the Force, for while the Indian and Chinese sections in this district show a decrease respectively of 14 and 7 admissions, the European section shows an increase of 36. The admissions from this portion of the Force in this district in 1884 were 41, whereas in 1885 they numbered 77.

Whitfield Station still holds its own as the worst of the outstations, sending on the worst type of malarial fever cases, and this is entirely due to the great amount of earth-cutting in virgin soil going on in the neighbourhood.

The other stations were about the same average as last year. The only station that has been improved is that of the Water Police, on being removed from a bulk to a large airy building on shore.

The admissions to Hospital from the various sections of the Force for the last five years are as follows:—

Admissions to Hospital.	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.
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Europeans.	98	99	99	99	108
Indians.	219	230	227	227	227
Chinese.	181	230	246	239	239
Total.	498	549	572	565	574

This shows that the past year was worse than all the previous years amongst the Europeans, but shows a steady improvement amongst the Indians and Chinese. Indeed for these two sections it has been the best year of the five.

The admissions to Hospital and deaths from the Police Force for the past ten years are given below:—

Admissions.	Deaths.
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1876.	410	7
1877.	418	6
1878.	466	9
1879.	590	8
1880.	568	13
1881.	498	10
1882.	549	8
1883.	600	10
1884.	486	7
1885.	495	9

There is a large increase both in sickness and mortality amongst the Police Force, but there is a slight increase of 10 in their strength, both sickness and mortality having exceeded any year in the previous ten years.

Table IV gives the average strength of the Force, the admissions to Hospital, deaths with their percentage to strength for 1885. I give the number of admissions and deaths for the past ten years below.

Admissions.	Deaths.
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1876.	410	7
1877.	418	6
1878.	466	9
1879.	590	8
1880.	568	13
1881.	498	10
1882.	549	8
1883.	600	10
1884.	486	7
1885.	495	9

The sickness therefore exceeds any of the previous years by over seventy admissions, and the deaths by eleven more than any previous year.

There was an outbreak of cholera among the Troops, and of eighteen cases admitted to Hospital, twelve died. This accounts in a great measure for the increase in the mortality but not for the increase in sickness. The cause of this outbreak amongst the Troops I cannot account for. No cases occurred amongst the Police in the Colony. The one Chinese Constable that was admitted with choleric symptoms contracted the disease in the Chinese City of Kowloon, and was sent in to Hospital immediately on his return to the Colony. No case was admitted to or occurred in the Gaol. In both cases the quinquaries are inferior for the most part to those occupied by Troops both as regards ventilation and over-crowding, and in the case of the Police some of the Stations are very greatly inferior in the unwholesomeness of their surroundings. I shall have more to say on this subject when referring to the sanitation of the Colony.

GOVERNMENT CIVIL HOSPITAL.
This Establishment remains in the same condition as in my last Annual Report. The foundations, with their sustaining walls for the new wards, &c. have taken the whole year in construction, and I hope this year will see their completion.

The houses for the Superintendent is now finished and occupied.

The admissions to Hospital this year have exceeded all former years, but are only slightly in excess of those in 1883. The following table shows the number and position brought to Hospital during the past five years:—

1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.
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Police.	498	549	599	486	495
Board of Trade.	117	116	116	60	108
Private party.	193	263	260	229	288
Government.	181	230	246	239	239
Servants.	67	88	105	96	124
Police Cases.	187	207	227	221	238
Destitutes.	222	230	201	222	270

The increase is pretty evenly distributed over all classes but chiefly noticeable on Private Paying Patients, Government Servants, and Destitutes. The increase in the number of Government Servants is chiefly caused by those employed on the Tait-tai excavations and tunnel which has proved very unhealthy work, and the patients suffer severely from malarial fever and its sequelae.

The number of admissions and deaths

in Hospital for the past ten years are as follows:—

Admissions.	Deaths.
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1876.	1,000	36
1877.	850	48
1878.	1,280	60
1879.	1,071	66
1880.	1,055	44
1881.	1,239	49
1882.	1,453	68
1883.	1,502	70
1884.	1,354	50
1885.	1,510	76

The percentage of deaths to admissions was 6.03, the highest percentage but two of the last ten years.

Sixteen of these deaths were from injuries. There were fourteen cases of gunshot wounds; of these two died. There was a larger number of severe injuries than usual, as will be seen by reference to Table No. V, of those continued wounds, many of the last five years, being more than double; the number being 40 in 1884 as compared with 83 in 1885.

In the last few years the number of surgical cases have been greatly on the increase, and this is to be expected with the greater increase of manufactures having complicated machinery.

This year the Superintendent was absent on sick leave for five months. During his absence Dr. Dodd, Pike, and Thompson of the Army Medical Department acted alternately in his place; but as their services could only be spared from their Military duties during the day, Dr. Marquis performed the duties at night, or in his absence I was called upon.

The services of another European, wardmaster were required, and a temporary one has been appointed with a strong recommendation from myself that the appointment shall be made permanent for next year.

Mr. Crow, the Apothecary and Analyst, was on the sick list for some time, and considerable difficulty was experienced during his temporary absence, but this was less than it might have been, had there not been a Chinese Student, Apothecary of considerable experience. His services were unfortunately lost, and this year there is a new Student Apothecary whom it will take a considerable time to instruct, before he can be of much service.

SMALL POX HOSPITAL.
Fourteen cases of Small Pox were admitted to this Hospital, of whom only one died. Most of them were of a mild type.

In the summer months, when no small pox cases are received, this building was used as a Cholera Hospital; nine cases were received, of whom six died. There were three Europeans, one colored man and five Chinese; of these, three Europeans and three Chinese died.

PUBLIC MORTUARY.
Table VIII gives the list of dead bodies brought in during the year, and these are yearly on the increase, this list does not include bodies brought in from the Government Civil Hospital for examination after death by the Coroner's order. Coroner's Inquests being very frequent. Dr. Marquis has performed the duties of the Medical Department of this new Establishment and been assisted by a Chinese Wardmaster from the Hospital. This I think is very objectionable, for not only does it take up a great deal of this man's time when he can ill be spared at the Hospital, but in view of the many and serious injuries in which he has to see to the dressing of wounds, his employment as Post Mortem attendant is most objectionable, and might lead to the danger of the patient being neglected, or even worse, recommended that instead of a watchman at this place, a resident well paid Post Mortem attendant should be appointed, which I hope will be sanctioned.

VICTORIA GAOL.
The following figures give the number of admissions and the daily average number of prisoners for the past ten years. There is a considerable decrease in both cases this year.

Total No. admitted.	Daily average No. of Prisoners.
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1876.	4,062	432.80
1877.	3,984	393.22
1878.	3,803	318.22
1879.	3,695	376.13
1880.	3,590	375.25
1881.	4,150	368.00
1882.	3,499	322.00
1883.	3,486	342.15
1884.	4,023	352.00
1885.	3,610	330.00

The above figures show a decrease in the number of admissions of nearly 400 as compared with 1884, with a decrease in the daily average of 22; but at times during the year the daily average was very high. The number of cases admitted to the Gaol Hospital were sixty-two less than in 1884, and the number of deaths two as compared with three in 1884.

Every day there are numbers of petty complaints attended to that are not registered, also a number of malingers and others that come up for examination or to be reported on as to their fitness for punishment.

Table XI shows the rate of sickness and deaths with the percentage to total admissions and daily average number of prisoners. In both cases it is very small, especially in the over-crowded state of the Gaol is taken into consideration, on which subject a Committee of Inquiry is now sitting to suggest a remedy if possible.

Table XII shows the number of admissions to Hospital direct from the Gaol; and also the number of admissions to Hospital from the Gaol, Chinese from debility or venereal disease.

Table XIII shows the number of opium smokers consuming one mace and upwards during the year, eighty altogether; of these twelve only were suffering from debility but with particular symptoms from the effects of opium on the general system, one from tubercle and two from ague, none had to be admitted owing to any effects from the deprivation of opium. Those suffering from debility were admitted as soon as received. No deaths occurred among the smokers of opium. The oldest was an opium smoker 52 years; his daily consumption being three maces, his weight on admission was 99 lbs. which increased to 115 lbs. by the end of his first month in Gaol, showing that 52 years of opium smoking had not much impaired his digestive powers.

The lightest weight on admission was 80 lbs. 5 lbs. heavier than the lightest weight admitted last year; he was 32 years of age, had only been a smoker 4 years; he consumed only 1 mace a day; he increased in weight 1 lb. in the first month, and was never under treatment for any cause.

These are a few queer facts for the anti-opium smoking Society to digest. That a man 70 years old, 52 years an opium smoker, consuming daily 3 maces (equivalent to 3 drams), increased his weight 6 lbs. in a month, shows that his digestive powers at any rate were not much affected by this terrible vice. His daily consumption of opium by smoking was enough to kill twenty-four men if eaten; allowing the loss of 10 grains to each, whereas a grain is given as a dose that would kill most men unacquainted to its use in logical works. Half a pint of gin is given as the smallest dose ever known to kill an adult;—fancy a man consuming 12 pints of gin a day for 52 years.

It is curious how small has been the success of Europeans in introducing drugs among the Chinese, compared with their success amongst nearly every other race. Perhaps it is as well that the Chinese have chosen the lesser vice of opium smoking. Of 32 Europeans admitted to the Government Hospital, 6 were admitted suffering from less than symptoms of Delirium Tremens. Of 221 Chinese admitted to Hospital 7 were suffering from debility, who were opium smokers; this is the only disease among the opium smokers that could be put down to opium. At the same time I am not of opinion the debility is directly caused by the loss of the digestive powers are not impaired, and the result of their treatment is as follows:—

No.	Age.	No. of Cases.	Weight on Admission.	Weight on Discharge.
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1.	40	5	3 maces	91 lbs.	94 lbs.
2.	32	10	1 mace	99 lbs.	101 lbs.
3.	64	32	5 maces	100 lbs.	100 lbs.
4.	70	52	3 maces	99 lbs.	105 lbs.
5.	35	6	2 maces	100 lbs.	102 lbs.
6.	63	10	2 maces	98 lbs.	102 lbs.
7.	70	40	3 maces	90 lbs.	94 lbs.

The sole treatment these prisoners received was Quinine mixture with low diet for the first few days, and then the full ordinary diet of the Gaol. They all, but the one marked with * increased in weight, and one was only in Gaol two weeks; he lost no weight.

The lightest weight of these 7 was 90 lbs. on admission, whereas the lightest weight among the opium smokers admitted into Gaol was 80 and he was never under treatment at all. The average weight of the opium smokers was about 105, and 28 of them were up to or over the average weight of Chinamen admitted into Gaol which is about 110 lbs., that is giving a very liberal average from calculations made. My strongest chair-coolies, who is a giant compared with 90 and he was never under treatment at all. The average weight of the opium smokers was about 105, and 28 of them were up to or over the average weight of Chinamen admitted into Gaol which is about 110 lbs., that is giving a very liberal average from calculations made. My strongest chair-coolies, who is a giant compared with 90 and he was never under treatment at all. 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